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EGOTISM

It is generally conceded that the egoist is a very undesirable person to cultivate, his characteristics are well-known, his conceit and self-assertion we treat with as much toleration as our natures are capable of, and we dismiss the subject of selfishness as an evil trait in *other people*, to be endured by us as patiently as possible.

As however there are always two sides to a question—two aspects to life—so the more thoughtful man will recognize underneath the apparent evil of selfishness a force which, properly directed, should be very effective in work and it may be well to note, if we can, something of the origin and history of this aggressive characteristic in man, so as to see where we ourselves stand with regard to it, and whether we are using the force which tends to what the world calls egotism *destructively* in fostering turbulence and commotion, or *constructively* in making for peace.

When, for instance, our child stamps his little foot and demands something for himself, we smile and our heart rejoices; not that we think he is right—we know that he is not right and we begin to teach him to control himself and not to be selfish. At the same time we rejoice because we recognize there a force which we can mould, a force that he can later use, something which is going to be strength in the future. It may, if neglected, degenerate into base selfishness; but with our fostering care and with control, the child will learn to use that force and not abuse it, so that it will grow in him into strength of will, and firmness of purpose and decision, all of which qualities are essential to the man of power.

Altruism, unselfishness and the good of all men should be the

object of our daily life, as the ultimate aim of the spiritual life is to know and love God. Yet, as we look around us, we see mostly the turbulence induced by destructive thought—selfishness—men looking for another's downfall in order to rise themselves, and we call this, evil. We name those things evil which are a little lower than ourselves; they are not really evil, they are only ourselves in a less degree.

If we look back into the history of selfishness as a quality, a force, we find that it is the "I-making" force. This idea of demanding something for ourselves was non-existent in the very early times—that is when we look back to the birth of our humanity upon this earth.

At first all was Unity, Oneness; for the first part of the activities that are set in motion in the creation of the world are of an out-going nature. That is to say, the Solar-Logos gives forth of his energies into his work, into His system, just as a business man does today in establishing his particular work. For a year or two he gives out, always giving and never receiving, until at last his receipts begin to come in and the work is established. This outgoing is the involutionary process and afterwards comes evolution.

There are always three aspects of this force. There is, first, the giving forth from above, of which we have spoken—the giving out of the energies. Then there is growth from below—the building up of the physical, by planning and thinking about the work and getting together the material. But those two will not meet; there is no possible way of uniting spirit and matter without a third intermediary. And so, in the constitution of man, there are, not only his spiritual nature and his physical body, but there is a third force, one aspect of which we see in the world as egotism.

This force was brought to bear upon our race after the physical body had been prepared and after the divine nature had descended by involution so far that it could take cognizance of it. So these two were waiting, the body on the one hand and the spiritual nature on the other. Then there came forward to unite them what is named in the ancient writings the "Sons of the Flame," the Sons of Wisdom and they endowed man with his Intellectual Nature with which to unite the higher with the lower man.

It is evident, therefore, that egotism, or what is called the force of Ahamkara—the I-making part of man—came into the world to serve a good purpose, a purpose which could not have been served in any other way. This was to unite the spiritual nature of man with the physical and the lower development, in order that these might be raised through the intellectual into the spiritual realm, so that man might be perfected and be entirely in control of all his faculties. The spiritual man was as an infant, knowing little about the condition of things around him, and nothing about his own past or future. The infant humanity was very much in that stage before

the advent of Ahamkara, or the force which makes for I-ness and separation.

It is quite true that man cannot truly separate himself from God or from his brothers or from anything which is around him, because in his real nature he is one with all; but in his thoughts he can so separate himself, and if he thinks that things are thus and so he will act as if they were so, because he has that idea in his mind. Nor is the selfish person one who does everything for himself and nothing for any one else, though this might seem so at first sight. A person can do a great work for the world, for instance, and yet be a very selfish person. The question will be largely whether he, in doing that work, is separating himself from the people *with* whom he is working, whether in doing that work he is separating himself from the people *for* whom he is working. He may be working for them and yet looking at them as one thing and himself as another thing, and expect to receive credit, or at least common respect, common courtesy. In doing this work he may be separating himself from his family, who have a right to some attention. He may be separating himself even from his higher nature, perhaps; or from something which he has a right to take care of. Whenever we separate ourselves from others, except in the realization of some special purpose we are selfish. If we expect everyone to center around us, because we are doing a great work, if we shut ourselves up in that work and do not consider the feelings of those with whom we are associated; if we give them pain, or interfere with their lives, we may be very selfish, even though the work that we are doing be a philanthropic work, and one for the good of the world.

Nor is it a question of the pleasure we derive from the work, but rather of how far we are able to work in harmony and unity with others; how far we can enter into the sorrows of others, how far we can be at one with them.

Most people have an idea that it is selfish to do anything that we like. It may be. But, on the other hand, it may not be. Selfishness does not rest upon whether we like a thing, or whether we do not like it. As we said a moment ago, selfishness depends on whether or not we separate our desires and wishes or our acts and thoughts from the good of the whole. We may do a thing because we like it, or we may do it because we think it is a duty or for any other reason. Selfishness consists in separating the soul from the whole, separating the individual from the cosmos, separating man from his fellow, and especially from the law of God.

In the Voice of the Silence we read "The selfish devotee lives to no purpose. The man who does not go through his appointed work in life has lived in vain. Follow the wheel of life; follow the wheel of duty to race and kin, to friend and foe, and close thy mind to pleasure as to pain."

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SUBJECT OF LECTURE
SUNDAY EVENING, NOV. 24, AT 8:15
"The Survival of the Fittest"

CHRISTMAS SUGGESTIONS

Christmas is now just a little more than one month away, and there is no time of the year when our heart goes out in love to others so strongly as during this season devoted to the furthering of other peoples' happiness. We all have in mind a long list of those whom we would like to "make glad," but it is not always easy to find an appropriate gift, one which will express our good-will and friendship and be a real contribution to the happiness of the recipient. The following suggestions may be found helpful:

THE BULLETIN—Those who have themselves found THE BULLETIN of interest, and who have personally been inspired or benefited by the teachings given through the medium of its pages, will have at Christmas a suitable opportunity for passing on to others those teachings by which they themselves have profited. Few things are more appropriate as a Christmas or New Year remembrance than a year's subscription to a magazine. THE BULLETIN, published each week, will not only be a recurring token of the love of the friend giving it, but will be a much appreciated aid on the upward path.

We therefore suggest to present subscribers and to members, Active and Corresponding, of the O. E. S., that each number among his Christmas gifts to others at least one subscription to THE BULLETIN for some friend. Send in subscription now, with your card and greetings, and we will mail these with a receipt for a year's subscription to THE BULLETIN and our little booklet, "The Way" to your friend in time to reach him by Christmas.

CALENDARS—Often one does not wish to make a substantial gift, but would still like to send some kindly remembrance. Then our Society Calendar, spiritually suggestive in the symbolism of its decoration and dainty in coloring, will be very suitable. In size it is 8½ x 11 inches, and is printed in four tints, heliotrope, blue, cafe au lait and olive green—each on a background of stone gray paper, and tied with a cord to match predominant shade. Please specify the color preferred. Price, 50 cents, net; by mail, 55 cents.

PINS AND PENDANTS—One of our Society pins or pendants would make a charming Christmas gift to a fellow-member of the O. E. S., and one which would be certain to be appreciated. The pin is slightly smaller than the accompanying cut. It shows in the center the Sacred name (of deep Esoteric meaning) in white lettering, and from this there pour forth rays of Wisdom, Love and



Power upon all beings throughout the whole Universe. The Kaf, which is shown in gold, symbolizes our Society receiving these rays, collecting them and giving them forth in spiritual truths to the whole world. The background is the dark blue of Space, and the curved surface represents our world or sphere.

The Kaf is the third letter of the alphabet of the Magi; it is the ineffable symbol of the Sacred Science and represents the power of the Initiates and also the realization of that power. Our Society has chosen this symbol to represent its characteristics of strength and activity in serving the world, and also to signify the place it is designed to occupy and the part it has to play in the New Era.

These pins may be had from The Secretary, O. E. S., at the following cost:

Solid Gold, with safety catch.....	\$3.50
Gold Filled, with safety catch.....	1.00
Gold Plated, no safety catch.....	.75
Pendants—Solid Gold, \$3.50; Gold filled, \$1.00.	

BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS GIFTS

A good book, that supplies the inspiration needed in moments of stress and trial is doubly useful to us when associated with the love of a dear friend.

Send your order in good time so that you will be represented in the Christmas festivities. Send us your card with your order and we will enclose it in the book and mail to any part of the world, and this is one of the ways in which our subscribers can be of help to us.

The Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna, ed. by <i>Abhedananda</i>75
The Gospel of Buddha, <i>Paul Carus</i>	paper .35; cloth 1.00
The Light of Asia, or the Great Renunciation, <i>Sir Edwin Arnold</i>	leather 1.00; paper .25; cloth .75
The Song Celestial (poetical trans. Bhagavad Gita), <i>Sir Edwin Arnold</i>	leather 1.00 cloth .75
The Dhammapada, translated fr. Chinese by S. Beal.....	.75
Works, <i>Ralph Waldo Emerson</i> , 12 vols.; the set 15.00; single volumes	1.25
Thoughts on the Spiritual Life, <i>Jacob Behmen</i>75
The New Theology, <i>R. J. Campbell</i>	1.50
Of the Love of God, <i>St. Francis de Sales</i>	1.00

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MEDITATION

There is a clear distinction between these two stages of growth: man's knowledge of himself as a "personality" and his consciousness of his "individuality."

Ahamkara, the "I" making force, makes of man a personality, it causes him to recognize himself as apart, or different in his circumstances, from other men, or from God. As long as this force dominates him he does not look for the similarity in all things, for the good in all men, or even for the presence of God in the world; but he looks for differences, for opposites, for evil motives and faults everywhere.

The more advanced man, whose individuality is developing, knows that true life consists in following the Divine Will; he does not regard the faults or the motives of others but rather his own weaknesses. He centers himself and adjusts his life to the laws of the Universe, gladly recognizing the unity of all things. So his life is much more peaceful and happy than that of the other, because it is more orderly.

"Do not fancy you can stand aside from the bad man or the foolish man. They are yourself, though in a less degree than your friend or your master. . . . Remember that the sin and shame of the world are your sin and shame; for you are a part of it; your Karma is inextricably woven with the great Karma. . . . The self-righteous man makes for himself a bed of mire. Abstain because it is right to abstain—not that yourself shall be kept clean."

"The personality *desires*, the individuality *possesses all things*."

PERSONALITY AND INDIVIDUALITY

1. In addition to the Divine Spark in man, he is two-fold: Personal and Individual. The personal man is mortal, the "persona" or mask of the real man.
2. The individuality endures beyond the death of the body and comes forward repeatedly into incarnation until all its desires shall have been purified and satisfied.
3. The warrior is thyself, yet thou art but finite and liable to error. He is eternal and is sure. He is eternal truth.
4. The personalities are destroyed at death; the individuality remains, enriched with the result of its experiences.
5. The self of matter and the Self of Spirit can never meet. One of the twain must disappear; there is no place for both.
6. Ere the Soul's mind can understand, the bud of personality must be crushed out, the worm of self destroyed forever.
7. The source of the Real Being must be sought in the Bosom of the Absolute.

(Books for Christmas continued from page five.)

What Esoterism Is, <i>Agnes E. Marsland</i>	paper, .35; cloth	.50
First Principles of Esoterism, <i>Agnes E. Marsland</i>		
Special Christmas reduction.....	leather, \$1.25; cloth	1.00
Power Through Repose, <i>Annie Payson Call</i>		1.00
In Search of a Soul, <i>Horatio W. Dresser</i>		1.25
The Great Within, <i>C. D. Larson</i>50
The Hidden Secret, <i>C. D. Larson</i>50
Life More Abundant, <i>Henry Wood</i>		1.20
Life Transfigured, <i>Lilian Whiting</i>		1.25
Through Silence to Realization, <i>Floyd B. Wilson</i>		1.00
Pilgrim's Progress, <i>John Bunyan</i>75
The Practice of the Presence of God, <i>Brother Lawrence</i>		
.....	paper, .08; boards	.30
The Christian Creed, <i>C. W. Leadbeater</i>		1.25
The Esoteric Basis of Christianity, <i>Wm. Kingsland</i>		1.25
The Discourses of <i>Epictetus</i> , translated by <i>Geo. Long</i>		1.50
Thoughts, <i>Marcus Aurelius Antoninus</i>		1.00
The Apocalypse Unsealed, <i>J. M. Pryse</i>		2.00
Jesus, the Last Great Initiate, <i>Edouard Schure</i>		
.....	paper, .35; cloth	.75
Rama and Moses, <i>Edouard Schure</i>75
The Path to Perfection, <i>Swami Ramakrishnananda</i>	paper	.15
The Soul of Man, <i>Swami Ramakrishnananda</i>		1.00
The Universe and Man, <i>Swami Ramakrishnananda</i>		1.08
Christ, the Messenger, <i>Swami Vivekananda</i>	paper	.25
Inspired Talks, <i>Swami Vivekananda</i>		1.25
The Glimpse; an Adventure of the Soul, <i>Arnold Bennett</i>		1.20
The Coming Race, <i>E. Bulwer-Lytton</i>		1.00
A Strange Story, <i>E. Bulwer-Lytton</i>75
Zanoni, <i>E. Bulwer-Lytton</i>60
Three often quoted occult stories by Bulwer-Lytton.		
"The Dweller on the Threshold" is found in Zanoni.		
The Blossom and the Fruit, a True Story of a Black Magician.		
<i>Mabel Collins</i>		1.25
The Idyll of the White Lotus, <i>Mabel Collins</i>		1.00
The Throne of Eden, a Psychological Romance, <i>W. J. Colville</i> ...		1.00
Brother of the Third Degree, <i>W. L. Garver</i>		1.00
A story of the black and white brotherhoods in Paris.		
Noontide Meditations for the Esoteric Disciple, <i>Agnes E. Marsland comp.</i>	paper, .25; cloth	.50
Special	leather	1.00
The Way, <i>Agnes E. Marsland</i>	paper	.10
The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, <i>Fitzgerald's</i> trans. beauti- fully illustrated by <i>Maurice Greiffenhagen</i>	paper	.25

To train ourselves to live in these beautiful serene realms, where simply to live is everlasting joy, we must learn to be still; never to force anything, but to so live that we constantly depend upon infinite power to come forth and do what the heart may desire to have done. It is while living in this state that we feel the real presence of higher power—invincible power; and it is by giving full and free expression to this power that we transcend all limitations and demonstrate the great truth that all things are possible.

—Larson, *The Hidden Secret*.